

been looking for that tusk for a long time. [Laughter]

Anyway, our history is rich with pioneers and innovators who have used their God-given talents to improve our Nation. After all, it was Benjamin Franklin who invented the bifocals, and you will see his picture hanging here in the White House, or Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone.

Creative men and women are building on the foundation laid by those geniuses, and the same thing is going to happen in the future with the foundation laid by these geniuses. I mean, after all, Franklin's bifocals are giving way to LASIK surgery—[laughter]—and Alexander Graham Bell's telephone plays MP3s. [Laughter]

We're proud to honor a new generation of people who have strived for excellence; people whose discoveries have changed America and the world. And that's what we're here to honor: discovery and hard work and creative minds.

The men and women we honor here hold more than 100 patents. They are the leaders in business and industry. They publish influential books. They chair academic departments in some of our country's finest universities. Our honorees have made breakthroughs in the range of—in a range of fields, including polymer chemistry, neurobiology, condensed matter physics—all a little esoteric for a history major, I might add. [Laughter]

Each of our honorees has extended the frontiers of knowledge, and in so doing, they've inspired a wave of innovation. We're an innovative society, and one of the main reasons why is we got very capable people who are willing to use their talents to push for new innovations. The work has helped inspire new medicines to treat diseases, strengthen security in Americans' airports, build new jet engines. They have helped create a global marketplace through a single phrase: "Find it on eBay." [Laughter]

Each of these folks up here has earned the appreciation of our country. And one way to express our appreciation is to present a medal, and that's what we're doing.

I do want to thank the members of our academic community for helping youngsters understand the importance of math and

science and engineering. Today we've got students from Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Banneker Academic High Schools. And I know that some of the recipients here took time out to inspire, and I hope scientists and mathematicians and engineers all across the country will serve as mentors and role models to encourage young folks to take a serious interest in academics—in the academic of engineering and physics and sciences and biology, so that some day another American President will be able to hang a medal around their neck.

All in all, this is an important day for our country, because it reminds people that innovation and science are important for our future and that good education is important for that future as well. I want to thank you all again for your many contributions to our Nation. I want to thank you all for coming to witness this important ceremony.

And now I ask the military aide to read the citations.

[At this point, Maj. Curtis Buzzard, USA, Army Military Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania

September 29, 2008

President Bush. I'm honored to welcome my friend the President of Lithuania here to the Oval. Welcome back, Mr. President. I've come to admire your courage, your straightforwardness, and the job you've done for your country.

President Adamkus. Thank you.

President Bush. I have enjoyed working with you on a variety of issues. Lithuania's ascension into NATO is a very important part of our foreign policy, yours and mine. It's important for the people of Lithuania to know that when the United States makes a commitment through, for example, Article 5 of the treaty, we mean it. I'm proud of the

alliance we've established and your contribution to that alliance.

We also talked about Georgia-Russia and the need for, you know, democracies to be able to stand on their own feet without fear of bullying. And you've made some very courageous statements on that issue, and I appreciate that very much.

We talked about energy independence, and you explained to me your situation with your present power and your future strategies. And I want to thank you very much for being forthright with your strategy and understanding that the more independent you are from an energy perspective, the more independent you are from a political perspective. And I thought that was very wise, and we'll try to help you as best as we can.

And finally, our hope and—is that by mid-October, there will be visa waiver granted to the citizens of Lithuania. You've worked hard for that issue, and it's—I think you can take back to your people a very positive report about this very important initiative. And you and your government deserve a lot of credit for it.

All in all, I've really enjoyed working with you. There's a lot more to do in 4 months, and I plan on doing it. And I know you and I will be, you know, working together. So thank you very much for coming.

President Adamkus. Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to express the gratitude by the entire Lithuanian nation for your constant support, and if that would not be for you, I don't believe we would be the members of NATO, and that the entire security question in the region would be at doubt.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Adamkus. Now, we definitely have some problems, like you just indicated with the press, about energy. We're trying to resolve it. Hopefully, we will, with your help. And since we need United States presence more as I indicated to you, European Union is coming up with own foreign policies and policies for Europe. But without United States presence, definitely that will be job not completed. So I hope that the United States will be visible, just like I ask you if the United States will be more visible in the

Baltic region over there, just to show our neighbors that we're definitely not alone.

And we are building the democracy together, not I mean by individually, state by state. And all those years I have worked with you, here, those over there—memorable, great years. Thank you very much, on behalf of all the Lithuanian people.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine

September 29, 2008

President Bush. I was disappointed in the vote with the United States Congress on the economic rescue plan. We put forth a plan that was big because we got a big problem. I'm going to be talking to my economic advisers after my meeting here with the President, and we'll be working with Members of Congress—leaders of Congress on the way forward. Our strategy is to continue to address this situation—economic situation head on. And we'll be working to develop a strategy that will enable us to continue to move forward.

Mr. President, welcome. I welcome you here to the Oval Office. I admire your steadfast support for democratic values and principles. A lot of Americans have watched with amazement how your country became a democracy. We strongly support your democracy. We look forward to working with you to strengthen that democracy.

You and I just had a good discussion about a variety of issues. We discussed, you know, the NATO and the membership application process. We discussed energy independence. We discussed ways that we can work together to bring stability and peace to parts of the world. And I thank you for joining us here in Washington in the Oval Office, and I send my respects to the people of Ukraine.

President Yushchenko. First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank for the atmosphere that our negotiations were held in.